

**Blind Task Force Meeting
August 8, 2007
Missouri School Boards Association (MSBA)
2100 I-70 Drive, S.W.
Columbia, Missouri**

Members Present: Steve Berman; Donna Borgmeyer; Michael Evans; Susan Ford; Chip Hailey; Karen Halsey; Heike Imler; Kent Kolaga; Patti Schonlau; Jim Sucharski; Jacob Wilson

Members Not Present: Paul Ajuwon; Brad Hart; Ella Wolfe

Guests Present: Roselie Backer-Thompson; Jan DeHart; Jennie Mascheck; Mike Merrick

DESE Staff Present: Lori Conner

Call to Order/Introductions: Patti Schonlau called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Steve Berman took roll call.

Welcome and Introductions:

Review and Approval of August 8, 2007 BTF Agenda: The following changes were made to the agenda: change in agenda order for the GH player demonstration and discussion; Blind Skills Specialist (BSS) Update was added.

Jim Sucharski made a motion to accept the agenda changes. Donna Borgmeyer seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Review and Approval of May 16, 2007 BTF Minutes: Page 2 under section "Special Education Assistant Commissioner," change last sentence to read "She has worked for 16 years as a Legal Counsel and has been meeting with stakeholder groups to obtain input from them to better serve students with disabilities."

Jim Sucharski made a motion to accept the above-changes to the minutes. Susan Ford seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

GH Player Demonstration and Discussion: Roselie Backer-Thompson demonstrated the GH Player (software), reported on the

Braille Display unit, and National Instructional Materials Accessibility Standard (NIMAS)/National Instructional Materials Access Center (NIMAC). Missouri Assistive Technology (MoAT) has been designated as an authorized user of NIMAC, which is the repository for electronic textbooks. Electronic files contain watermarks and fingerprints so that they are not used illegally.

BSS Update: Jan DeHart gave a brief overview of her year-end report submitted to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) which included: one presentation for the National Federation for the Blind (NFB), eight workshops of her own, provided services for 38 students in 24 school districts. Jan is planning a workshop for Missouri vision teachers in approximately eight weeks. She is inviting Yvonne Ali to present information about American Printing House for the Blind, Inc. (APH) and NIMAS/NIMAC.

Current BTF Membership Vacancies: Missouri Council of Administrators of Special Education (MO-CASE) has been contacted regarding an appointment to the Special Education Administrator vacancy. Discussion regarding contacting a Building Administrator group is taking place to provide an appointment to the Building Principal Vacancy. One application has been submitted for the Rehabilitation Council for the Blind representative.

In addition to current vacancies, the DESE will also post any upcoming vacancies for the Blind Task Force (BTF) prior to term expiration.

Standing Committee Updates

Budget/Governmental Affairs Committee: Nothing reported.

Concerns were expressed by Susan Ford regarding inadequate funding for the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped (NLS) Book Program. She asked members to contact legislators for support in additional funding.

Transition Committee: Nothing reported.

Annual Study Committee: The report that was shared at the last BTF meeting was submitted to the DESE.

Ad hoc Committee Updates

MAP Improvement Committee: Work on new testing procedures, exit testing programs, and how the state will be looking at Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) have been points of discussion. The MAP Braille

Review will be held January 25, 2008 at the DESE. Any members available to serve with this endeavor were asked to contact Heike Imler.

Outreach Ad Hoc Committee: Nothing reported.

BSS Effectiveness Committee: Blind Skills Specialists and committee members have provided potential questions for district surveys regarding the BSS effectiveness. The survey is currently being finalized by the DESE and committee members will be asked to review it before the final draft goes to print. BSS will provide surveys to districts that receive their services. Upon completion, the districts will return the surveys to the DESE.

Vision Summit 2008 Committee: Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB) plans to commit \$7,500 and Missouri Council for the Blind (MCB) will sponsor breakfast for the Summit.

The current members of the Vision Summit 2008 committee are: Steven Berman (Chairperson), Michael Merrick, Patricia Schonlau, Bradley Hart, Susan Ford, Chip Hailey, Ella Wolfe, Donna Borgmeyer, Aundrayah Shermer, Jacob Wilson and Michael Evans. The committee will have a conference call during the first week of September to discuss initial plans for the next Vision Summit.

Kent Kolaga made a motion for the BTF to prepare and send a letter to various organizations asking for support of the Summit. Donna Borgmeyer seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

National Agenda and MSB Report: Jim Sucharski will be attending the National Agenda, APH meeting, and MCB meeting. He also announced that Missouri School for the Blind (MSB) received the status of fully accredited following their recent MSIP review.

Current Workshops/Events within the State: Mike Merrick reported on the Shared Vision for Missouri meeting that will be held August 13-14, 2007 at MSB. This group will work to develop a shared vision of services for visually impaired (VI) Missourians. Some of the entities being represented include: Special School District (SSD), Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Lighthouse for the Blind, Rehabilitation Services for the Blind (RSB), MSB, Alpha Pointe, Children's Center for Visually Impaired, Independent Living Center, and Missouri School for the Deaf (MSD).

Jennie Mascheck elaborated on the Shared Vision for Missouri meeting by reporting that the Steering Committee formulated four goals for this activity: to collect information for action plan; develop an online directory; initiate a list serve; kick off the 2009 Louis Braille 200th birthday celebration. The small groups will work on early childhood issues, school age, employment issues (including transportation issues), transition issues, professional issues, adult living, and identification referral.

In addition, Jennie announced that Missouri Statewide Parent Involvement Network (MoSpin), a family focused home-based intervention program, is currently training their first cohort for families with children ages birth to five. The number of families being served has more than doubled since January 2007.

Governor's Council Disabilities Update: Donna Borgmeyer reported that 13 students attended the Youth Leadership Program Forum. A new disability program specialist will begin work on August 13, 2007.

Upcoming BTF Meeting: The next BTF meeting will be held November 14, 2007 at Missouri School Board Association (MSBA) in Columbia.

Agenda for Next Meeting: Suggested agenda items include: 2008 Vision Summit, continuing education for VI educators, Executive Summary report on the Shared Vision meeting, National Agenda, RSB Deputy Director.

Steve Berman made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Chip Hailey seconded the motion and it was unanimously approved.

Meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.